



English Language Class as a Space for Students from Indigenous Community

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Abstract

The learning of English, the lingua franca and also a language of empowerment is a challenge and an opportunity for the learners of indigenous community and those who are visually impaired. The paper attempts to shade light on the problems of acquisition of English for such students. The periphery of the state of Gujarat is inhabited by the indigenous tribes, living in the hilly forest area with very little exposure and access to Gujarati, the official language of the state or English. They speak dialect at home which is without any script. It has different syntax and intonation from standard Gujarati and English. There are no separate textbooks in school for students rooted in dialect, song, dance and rituals. Most of them are the first generation learners of English. The subaltern often fails to speak in standard, established, mainstream language. The paper writer has been teaching English at the Undergraduate level and empowering the ambitious learners who would like to develop working knowledge of English that can help them in finding jobs and mobility. Nalini-Arvind & T. V. Patel Arts college belongs to the semi-urban area. The students of indigenous community who join the college stay in hostel and they are connected with peers and faculty through WhatsApp. With an emphasis on collective learning, which aims at enhancing the learner's confidence in acquiring a new language, the paper also tries to address the problems of acquisition and creating a space for learning through conducive atmosphere. The institute has a few visually impaired learners. Special efforts are made to enable them to pick up the language through ICT and fellow learners.

Keywords: *indigenous community, visually impaired, empowerment, language acquisition and skills, Collective learning, ICT.*

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